



# Best Practices 2000

## U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development SOUTHEAST/CARIBBEAN EDITION

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<http://www.hud.gov/bestpractices.html>

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### Building a Better Tomorrow 2000

Over the past two years, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has undergone a marked transformation in the way it conducts business — it is no longer business as usual at HUD. This change required a fundamental paradigm shift, which was dramatic for many. We dared to step forward and make a personal commitment to restoring the public trust by demonstrating competence in the way we deliver services. We recognized that our responsibility is to help people empower themselves.

Our successes have been many. We have forged partnerships with local governments, communities and the private sector — something never before heard of in government affairs. We have lifted communities to a higher level through grassroots actions by empowering communities and individuals. And, through the restructuring of field organizations to include community empowerment teams, we are setting a foundation to develop and perpetuate a unified, one-HUD approach to meeting community needs. All this in only the second year

of HUD 2020 Management Reform. Just imagine what the next 20 years will bring, if we can achieve so much in only two years.

Even though our traditional goals remain the same — fighting for fair housing, increasing affordable housing and homeownership, reducing homelessness, promoting jobs

*(see BUILDING on page 3)*



Davey Gibson,  
Secretary's  
Representative  
Southeast/Caribbean

### Effective Techniques of Top Performers!

#### Summer College-Prep Program Helps Disadvantaged Students Get Back to the Books

In order to meet the educational goals of residents, HUD's Kentucky office initiated a program called "Youth Orientation to College," which strives to help disadvantaged students of all ages succeed in higher education. The program is offered to residents of the Housing Authority of Maysville and consists of an initial summer semester held on-site at the Beechwood Community Center. Teachers recruited from nearby Maysville Community College create a classroom setting in the community center and help to acclimate students

to the demands of college-level coursework. Students take 12 credit hours of preparation in the liberal arts, sciences, and technical fields before attending formal courses in the fall at Maysville Community College. Financial aid is available for eligible students.

This program was established to calm the apprehension and meet the needs of many public housing residents that wish to further their education. With the creation of this on-site orientation program, the transportation requirements and concerns about after-school child care were eliminated. In addition, worries about acclimation and academic performance were greatly reduced. The summer session greatly improved both resident retention and participation



Dr. Kuss gives individual attention while reinforcing the motivation of the instructors. The program took and continues to take great strides in showing HUD's commitment to enhance the quality of life for those dependent on its services. Considerable support for the program came from the City of Maysville, the local police force, the YMCA, county executives and

*(see COLLEGE-PREP on page 3)*

**Faith-Based Intervention Transforms Housing**

“It takes a village to raise a child” ...or counsel a struggling family ... or help a single mother find daycare. In Montgomery, AL, residents are doing just that. Over 500 volunteers from 26 area churches have united to provide a range of supportive services to residents at nine public housing developments.

In this unique initiative called the Strategies to Elevate People (STEP) Program, volunteers represent churches from 10 denominations in both African-American and Caucasian communities. The church leaders partnered with federal agencies, private businesses, financial institutions and other groups to meet the social, spiritual and supportive service needs of residents. By working together, volunteers were able to galvanize enough of the “right” resources to meet the individuals’ collective needs. This became critical as church leaders realized the magnitude of this undertaking and the value of involving other organizations. Collaborative work proved successful because the groups involved were able to raise \$270,000 of in-kind donations for the STEP Program.

Volunteers worked to improve the residents quality of life by sponsoring recreational programs, youth activities, tutoring and various social support services. The STEP Program enabled residents to develop an enhanced sense of pride in themselves and in their community. The overall success of these efforts also helped to restore residents’ trust in law enforcement and in multi-cultural initiatives.

For example, during a recent police chase, an alleged perpetrator ran into a public housing development to hide. To his surprise, residents quickly alerted police about his location and he was promptly arrested. This story illustrates the renewed trust that residents have for local law enforcement. In the past, residents would refuse to inform the police of such happenings.

Clearly, the residents of these public housing developments have benefited from the services provided. Additionally, the city of Montgomery and these volunteers enjoy the benefits of reduced crime levels, an enhanced sense of community, and the satisfaction that comes from partnering individuals from diverse cultures. This was truly a cooperative partnership that empowered residents and volunteers alike. ♦



Ballet students participated in a Master Class by Dr. Schaffer and Mr. Stern

**Ensuring Competitive Rental Rates in Subsidized Housing**

In Fort Meyers, FL, HUD established the Rental Assistance Committee (RAC) to ensure that as many families as possible have access to competitively-priced, safe, and sanitary rental housing opportunities in Fort Myers, FL. The RAC is staffed by HUD representatives and fosters collaboration among housing inspectors, real estate agents, tenants, and owners to manage federal and private sector resources. The committee’s preliminary responsibility is to compile data on rental fees currently collected in the national subsidized and non-subsidized housing markets. This data is combined with market rates and trends in the area served, in order to assist the local housing authority in determining competitive rental rates for subsidized properties. This research and analysis method helps to create a working formula for appraising all rental units before a Housing Assistance Payment contract is signed with the housing authority.

Efficiently managing the local housing authority’s financial resources benefits the entire community, not just the affected tenants and owners. In its first year of implementation, the program saved \$752,600, enabling an additional 181 families to receive housing assistance without increasing the housing authority’s budget. The program also helps restore the public’s trust in social service programs.

Initially, Executive Director Harry Adams and his team received minimal support from area owners, due to the tenant-based nature of the project. Owner seminars are now conducted on a quarterly basis to explain the details and advantages of the project. In addition, tenants receiving rental assistance are required to attend

*(see RENTAL RATES on page 3)*

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and economic opportunity, empowering people and communities and restoring the public trust — the primary emphasis has shifted away from HUD central, focusing instead on those working in the communities.

**EMPOWERMENT**

No longer are directives issued to communities, but rather a bottom-up, community-driven management style has been implemented to empower communities and individuals. By providing tools to implement revitalization strategies through various methodologies, we have empowered groups to find the best solutions for their needs — after all, no two communities are alike and no one solution will work for all. It is the partnership efforts of communities, private sector and governments working together that builds strength and helps communities to move forward.

**RESTORING PUBLIC TRUST**

By consolidating and reorganizing programs, HUD has been able to more

efficiently meet the needs of its constituents. In communities across the country, funds have been used to effectively empower individuals — and thus these efforts are restoring the public trust.

Community partnerships are an investment in the future that will build a better tomorrow for everyone.

**BEST PRACTICES**

Through the “Best Practices” initiative, we showcase the practices that are models of success in empowerment and building trust, as well as in the other areas important to HUD. Because of the success of the Best Practices program, HUD can now document true successes in the industry that can be used as prototypes for others.

Best practices is an ideal information tool for distributing ideas that work to others across the country.

As evidence of how exemplary professional commitment contributes to the outstanding success and credibility of the Department’s new approach to service delivery, it is

most appropriate to acknowledge the community practitioners within the Southeast/Caribbean area. Out of 3,365 Best Practices nominations nationwide, the Southeast/Caribbean submitted 582 nominations of which 55 were ultimately selected at HUD’s 1999 Best Practices Symposium. We take this opportunity to acknowledge such professional excellence and want to thank and commend every group, city and neighborhood that submitted Best Practices nominations in 1999. Most importantly, we recognize that it is the individual efforts of many that culminate in the overall success of the Department’s achievements and it’s contribution to our communities throughout the nation.

Obviously success does not end with those practices that have been demonstrated and emulated thus far. Our individual and collective successes will continue to be showcased and replicated through the Best Practices 2000 initiative. By sharing such successes with others, our legacy lives on and everyone will ultimately benefit from the efforts which you have put forth via the Best Practices program. ♦

**COLLEGE-PREP from page 1**

the United Way. These groups and agencies provided the facility upgrades, security, lunches, daycare, after-school care, and support that helped make this program such a success.

Residents were very excited about the availability of courses in computer science, algebra and history. One student completed her associate’s degree in three semesters, while others pursued careers in business, law enforcement and administrative support upon graduating from the program.

Despite the success, organizers did encounter a few challenges along

the way. For example, several residents were hesitant about committing to any computer awareness program that extended beyond 12 weeks, but were happy to participate in a three-week program. Some residents used their federal Pell grants for purposes other than education. The president of the community college and program staff surmounted these obstacles by continuing to support, motivate and encourage residents to achieve. Professors, administrators and staff of both the program and Maysville Community College were amply rewarded by the smiles on the faces of the residents and their families during the graduation ceremonies. ♦

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a four-hour orientation detailing their responsibilities. Thanks to these efforts and the publicity received from the print media, owners and property appraisers and AmeriCorps volunteers have joined the local HUD office, the City of Fort Myers and the Fort Myers Housing Authority to ensure the continued success of this program. ♦



## Best Practices 2000

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